"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."
—RIG VEDA

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Message of the East

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FATE AND FREEDOM

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

VOLUME XLIX 1960 NUMBER 2

GOD IS EVERYTHING

by Swami Vivekananda

Do you not remember what the Bible says: "If you cannot love your brother whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen?" If you cannot see God in the human face, how can you see Him in the clouds, or in images made of dull, dead matter, or in mere fictitious stories of your brain? I shall call you religious from the day you begin to see God in men and women, and then you will understand what is meant by turning the left cheek to the man who strikes you on the right. When you see man as God, everything, even the tiger, will be welcome. Whatever comes to you is but the Lord, the Eternal, the Blessed One, appearing to us in various forms, as our father and mother, and friend and child: they are our own soul playing with us.

As our human relationships can thus be made divine, so our relationship with God may take any of these forms, and we can look upon Him as our father or mother or friend or beloved. Calling God Mother is a higher ideal than calling Him Father, and to call Him Friend is still higher, but

the highest is to regard Him as the Beloved. The highest point of all is to see no difference between lover and Beloved. You may remember, perhaps, the old Persian story of how a lover came and knocked at the door of the beloved and was asked, "Who are you?" He answered, "It is I," and there was no response. A second time he came, and exclaimed, "I am here," but the door was not opened. The third time he came, and the voice asked from inside, "Who is there?" He replied, "I am thyself, my beloved," and the door opened. So is the relation between God and ourselves. He is in everything, He is everything. Every man and woman is the palpable, blissful, living God. Who says God is unknown? Who says He is to be searched after? We have found God eternally. We have been living in Him eternally. Everywhere He is eternally known, eternally worshipped.

KINSHIP OF IDEALS

All that is invisible is verily the infinite Brahman. All that is visible is also the infinite Brahman. The whole universe has come out of the infinite Brahman. Brahman is infinite although the whole universe has come out of It.

—Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

He has made of one blood all nations of men.

—New Testament

The manifestation of the divine Power varies in varying centers of activity, for variety is the law — not sameness. God is immanent in all creatures; He is even in the ant. The difference is in manifestation only. *—Sri Ramakrishna*

FATE AND FREEDOM

by Swami Paramananda

Is this which we call our fate something imposed upon us by an arbitrary hand or is it molded in some other way? Is there anything that we do ourselves that governs our destiny? These questions have been discussed and argued down through the centuries. Some are satisfied with the idea that the answer is beyond the reach of man and that he must simply accept it as the inevitable, while others, who are not convinced, try to find an explanation.

In India the system of thought which deals with this particular problem is known as karma, the law of compensation. It is very similar to what modern science calls the law of cause and effect, only it does not limit itself to material things. In fact karma has very little to do with the changeable, phenomenal world. It deals specifically with man himself, his way of life, his action and reaction, and his destiny. If we are able to understand karma we comprehend the law that governs all living things. Then what once seemed absurd and arbitrary becomes clear, and instead of rebelling we take another attitude toward life.

"Thou canst not gather what thou dost not sow; as thou dost plant the tree, so will it grow," we are told in the Code of Manu, a Hindu book of ethics. And we can read the same thing in the Bible in different words: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

If we do certain things, certain results will be produced whether we wish them or not. If we hold some particular thought in our mind it will bring about inevitable results although at the time we are doing the thinking we may not be at all conscious of the effect it will have. But surely someday we shall find it blossoming upon our tree of life.

There is a passage in one of the Upanishads where the problem is taken up and the statement is made, "Mind alone is the cause of man's bondage, and mind alone is the cause of man's freedom." This throws the responsibility entirely upon us, upon our own thoughts and attitudes. If what we call our fate has come upon us because of our wrong doing, wrong thinking or mistaken ideas, then it is for us to correct these, and there is no one who can do this for us except ourselves.

We must not, however, approach our problem in an egotistic or aggressive manner but with a feeling that God is just and with an understanding of the law, knowing that we are a part of that law. We must make our mind, our thoughts and our physical being so absolutely in harmony with that law that it can at all times manifest through us and gradually mold our life. Sometimes this molding may mean suffering but the wise man does not grow faint-hearted. He knows that there is no destruction for the soul, that the infinite Being is invincible and that nothing can alter that. He knows too that there is always a reason for everything — our misfortunes, our failures, our obstacles. When we understand this clearly we feel

no resentment toward God nor toward our fellow beings. Even people who are apparently impeding our progress do not seem responsible; we have no bitter feeling toward them, for they are merely instruments being used for the lessons we have to learn.

We alone provide the materials out of which our destiny is molded and for that reason we must work to build our life upon a permanent basis; otherwise happiness comes and goes. It all depends on what we ourselves contribute. There is a saying that we cannot get something for nothing. The man who tries to take advantage of another and thinks he is going to get away with it is very much mistaken. Emerson, in one of his essays, made the statement that we cannot have a slave and chain him and not have the other end of the chain fastened around our own neck. In other words, we cannot bind someone without being bound; we cannot do harm to anyone without being harmed. We may think we have escaped the ill result of a deed but this escape is only a momentary thing. The law holds us. There may be no one watching when we are doing a thing, but we know it, and we ourselves keep the record and must give an account of it until we can lift up our head and do as a great mystic said, "Look up to God and offer your whole being to Him."

In India the main objective of life is *mukti* which means liberation, freedom. Man must have his freedom. We are not born to be slaves, and yet for a thousand reasons we accept the notion that we are bound on all sides by nature and that

certain laws must absolutely govern us. But the spiritually enlightened tell us this is all a mistake. "Oh child of Immortality, the Truth makes thee free. Know that thou art the possessor of the Infinite."

However, realization does not come through theoretical knowledge. One cannot master it simply by reading books or scriptures; nor is it a matter of adhering to a dogma or belonging to a church, no matter how beautiful or lofty the ideal they convey. We have to realize the Truth, absorb it and apply it to our life.

It is the selfish man who is bound through egotism. He thinks of himself first, "I am so-and-so; I have this and that possession." He is tormented by self-created enemies. Anger, impatience and insult of others haunt him because he thinks he is so big and no one recognizes him. All this we create with ourselves, but one who is free from the little self, one who realizes the supreme Reality shining through him, having resigned his life to God, lives in the sunshine of Truth. He knows no bondage for himself although he does not cease to feel for people. One who is unkind and unfeeling certainly cannot deserve the compassion of the all-loving Father. The first step in our evolution is to be able to feel the suffering of others and to respond and reach out at the very sight of unhappiness. However, we should not act with the desire for results, and always we must extend our love without any thought of being loved in return.

There is no monopoly of spiritual life. It is the

common heritage of all living human beings and we have to realize that. As soon as we do we are freed from ignorance. It does not matter how we are placed, where we are placed and what difficulties are before us. If we have the sun of wisdom shining within we can always find our way and we can always give our best to the world. But in order to give the best we must have the best, and that we have to acquire. Forgiveness, contentment, childlike simplicity, truth and love are what we must serve if we wish to be free. Every thought we think plants a seed either for good or for evil and we are the only ones who can control this. The law is that whatever we think we become. It is very simple to give up objectionable qualities if we truly have the desire. Renunciation does not imply tearing something from our heart until it bleeds, for this will not make us free from bondage. Our first requirement is knowledge. Then when we begin to understand and find that there is something bigger and greater for us we suddenly realize that this is a heritage which is far superior to all worldly things.

Ignorance makes us wicked, selfish and criminal. We forget this, limit our lives by the idea of the body and bodily environment and seek to magnify the small desires. We divide ourselves up into a thousand parts and these parts are so very insignificant that they seem to require something from the outside to keep them alive. Yet when we come face to face with what is infinitely greater than the things of our physical life we cease to be selfish and self-centered. We become

divine; the law and the will of God work through us. It is not only to a few people that this blessing is given. We all have the capacity to receive it. All are the children of God; He is not partial. His blessings flow equally to all in a steady stream; yet often we do not know how to retain them. The rain water falls everywhere, but in some places it rolls off while in others it settles and soaks into the ground. In the same way God's grace is flowing steadily on; only those who are ready, who are noble, open, humble, pure and selfless, are able to retain it. Others do not know how for they are too absorbed in many things and many interests.

Why not make this mind of ours a God-mind? Has it not been given to us from the supreme Source? Why not then unite it with this force? This is the whole purpose and theme of a lofty philosophy. We may talk and theorize all our lives but it will do us little good. We must try to reach the very Fountainhead. Then blessings will be ours in abundance and we shall be able to give them to others.

It is necessary to evolve the high ideals in our heart so that they can become manifest in our life. We do this by using our intelligence and power of discrimination and also through our work. These means are given to us so that we may solve life's riddle and come closer to the core of the universe wherein lies the freedom of all.

Every living thing desires freedom; every human heart cries out for it. No one wants bondage. But the real bondage is our own self-created chain.

We hold the means of release in our own hand, yet cry out for someone to bring us salvation. The law of karma is not partial. It is always precise and systematic, and is ever working with accuracy. As we understand this law and are able to adjust our lives to it we undo all our fetters and become freed from ignorance.

This is the ideal we can realize if we give ourselves to it seriously and with real devotion. We do so much for something that holds our interest on the physical plane. A man will even risk his life for a little money which he can keep but a short time. If only we could put the same intensity into our efforts to realize our spiritual goal, attainment would not be so difficult. Realization comes directly when our purpose is firm and one-pointed. We must never be superficial. Our interest must spring from the very depths of our being. Only then will a new chapter open in our life and we shall begin to see things in a different light. Even suffering will lose its unpleasantness; for we shall learn to accept it as a great purifier.

What a tremendous step it is in human evolution when we commence to understand the working of the laws of cosmic Being, when we cease to shrink from the world, when we do not condemn our fellow man and are able to see Divine light shining from every face! We become united with every living thing and this new vision opens up a vista of usefulness and joy that we have not known before. Then life truly becomes a rich harvest and we sense not only our own freedom but the freedom of all that lives.

FROM BIRTH TO BIRTH

*by A. Ferdinand Herold**

Near the city of Vaisali, there was an immense wood that had been presented to the Master, and there he was living when the news came to him that his father, King Soddhodana, had fallen sick. The king was an old man; the illness was serious; it was feared that he was dying. The Master decided to visit him, and flying through the air he came to Kapilavastu.

The king mournfully lay on his couch. He was gasping for breath. Death was very near. Yet he smiled when he saw his son. And the Master spoke these words:

"Long is the road you have travelled, O king, and always did you strive to do good. You knew nothing of evil desires; your heart was innocent of hatred, and anger never blinded your mind. Happy is he who is given to doing good! Happy is he who looks into a limpid pool and sees his unsullied countenance, but far happier is he who examines his mind and knows the purity thereof! Your mind is pure, O king, and your death as calm as the close of a lovely day."

"Blessed One," said the king, "I understand now the inconstancy of the worlds. I am free of all desire; I am free of the chains of life."

Once again, he paid homage to the Buddha. Then he turned to the servants, assembled in the hall.

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*From his book, **The Life of Buddha,** translated by Paul C. Blum.

"Friends," said he, "I must have wronged you many times, yet never once did you show me that you bore malice. You were kind and good. But before I die, I must have your forgiveness. The wrongs I did you were unintentional; forgive me, friends."

The servants were weeping. They murmured: "No, you have never wronged us, lord!"

Suddhodana continued:

"And you, Mahaprajapati, you who were my pious consort, you whom I see in tears, calm your grief. My death is a happy death. Think of the glory of this child you brought up; gaze at him in all his splendor, and rejoice."

He died. The sun was setting.

The Master said:

"Behold my father's body. He is no longer what he was. No one has ever conquered death. He who is born must die. Show your zeal for good works; walk in the path that leads to wisdom. Make a lamp of wisdom, and darkness will vanish of its own accord. Do not follow evil laws; do not plant poisonous roots; do not add to the evil in the world. Like the charioteer who, having left the highroad for a rough path, weeps at the sight of a broken axle, even so does the fool, who has strayed from the law, weep when he falls into the jaws of death. The wise man is the torch that gives light to the ignorant; he guides mankind, for he has eyes, and others are sightless."

The body was carried to a great funeral pile. The Master set fire to it, and while his father's body was being consumed by the flames, while the

people of Kapilavastu wept and lamented, he repeated these sacred truths:

"Suffering is birth, suffering is old age, suffering is sickness, suffering is death. O thirst to be led from birth to birth! Thirst for power, thirst for pleasure, thirst for being, thirsts that are the source of all suffering! O evil thirsts, the saint knows you not, the saint who extinguishes his desires, the saint who knows the noble eight-fold path."

I AM THE ONE

by Swami Gnaneswarananda

Brahman, or that infinite and eternal storehouse of Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, is the source out of which every manifestation has emanated, in which it evolves, and into which it enters for eternal rest and peace. Consequently, I am made of the stuff of immortality, power and perfection. In the course of my present manifestation, no matter how it appears to be, it is that fundamental substance which predominates. My birthright is one of infinite power; in divine perfection I move; and when this journey ends I shall remain merged in that eternal ocean of bliss.

I meditate on that unity of life and feel a divine Presence within me and all round me. Illumined by that light within, I recognize one divine Reality in every form I contact. May that divine Light shine more and more radiantly! May it remove all obstructions, burn off all impurities and add strength, vigor and beauty to every atom of my being! I consecrate my life as a great offering for the achievement of that One, which is the source of the many!

GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS

by Srimati Gayatri Devi

Who is interested in God-consciousness? When we hear those words, our practical sense whispers, "If we are interested in God-consciousness, will it take care of us materially? Just what can man gain by God-consciousness? What particular purpose does it serve?"

To this we can only answer: "Are we reduced to such a state that we are interested only in that which sustains and supports our bodily existence? Are we animals, or less than animals, that we should be entirely concerned with what is convenient, more comfortable and more luxurious? Do we not still seek inspiration in things that are of the mind and of the spirit? Are we not interested in knowledge?"

Of course, we must admit that by the furthering of knowledge we have come to a destructive state. We use it for materialistic purpose to satisfy our greed, our love of possession and power. Yet we also have our pursuits of higher order, our intellectual ventures, our aesthetic desires which are seeking fulfillment in art, in music, in literature. And perhaps we have come to regard religion in this same light: By seeking religion man satisfies a certain need within himself.

What really is the purpose of religion in our individual life? It is to bring the reality of God close to our heart and mind. Primarily, our interest in religion, in religious philosophy should bring ever near at hand our own search and thirst for

that knowledge by which we can be related to basic Reality. If religion is to serve this purpose we must become interested in God-consciousness. God is not to be thought of as merely the kernel of a religious philosophy, or as a basic concept or as some idea with which we can deal in our spare moments. God-consciousness should be something so vital that it cannot be alienated from our everyday life. We must seek it through practical means. We must make room in our own existence for the idea of God to play a significant part, not that it may satisfy our superficial emotional or mental needs but it may lead us much further. Wherever you see the true application of religion, you behold men and women going far distances, as it were. They are not content with precepts and concepts, with dogmas and ideas. They become profoundly interested in the Reality behind all this.

Man cannot find God purely through intellectual speculation. He has to be shown the way, a specific way, by which he can make contact with Him. When we consider God-consciousness we are really seeking a way by which our own individual, separate consicousness may become definitely related to that other Consciousness which sustains and supports all existence. In the Bhagavad-Gita Sri Krishna speaks of Himself as being the Life-consciousness in all mankind. Every sentient being has within himself the seed of that higher consciousness. Everything that is sentient, everything that knows that it is, is vaguely aware of something else. Only in man do we find that this vague-

ness has been removed. He is the most fortunate of all conscious beings. He has the endowments of mind, of intellect; he has all the facilities and instruments at his disposal with which he can explore and investigate and go forth into those realms which are beyond material phenomena.

We must realize that in dealing with consciousness, we are not concerned entirely with manifested phenomena in a material sense. Vedanta tells us that the manifested existence is always sustained and supported by the unmanifested, the invisible; and that man's concern with the invisible should not be regarded as something dangerous or wholly uncommon, something to be feared and avoided. People approach religious ideals — to be more specific, the search for God — with so much caution, they cannot make any headway at all. They just stay where they are, wound up in a few notions and beliefs they have gathered, and that is all they can handle. Such caution is an impediment to man's spiritual progress.

We must follow a straight road, the direct approach. We do not take any road in life unless we have a destination in mind — one that holds our attention. Becoming interested in God-consciousness, man follows an invisible path. He does not go outwardly, instead, inwardly. He works with himself, and working with himself, he finds a depth beyond himself. He comes in contact with the Reality which is within, forgotten, submerged, undiscovered — waiting to find its way up to the surface.

We live in an age which is paying more and

more heed to the mental and psychological aspects of man's being, dealing with the substratum of consciousness as we understand it. However, all our psychology does not necessarily lead us to That which is beyond. We can be interested in the conscious, in the subconscious, and stop right there.

Philosophy asserts that there is the conscious, there is the subconscious and there is also superconsciousness. Let us not leave this most important part alone. If we can understand what the superconscious is, we shall be able to relate the conscious and subconscious to it. This is where Vedanta makes its great contribution because it includes psychology. It approaches the subject in the right manner, leading the human mind through itself to That which is beyond itself.

Of course, there are certain phenomena which manifest themselves that can be puzzling to those who are utterly unfamiliar with them. But the point is this: we should not remain unacquainted with the superconscious. Man has within himself the capacity to experience God-consciousness, but if he regards it as a phenomenon set apart from his own being his expression is going to be very limited. I believe above all else in the normalcy of man's religious search; we should give religion the natural place it has never had. If one is deeply interested in religion, it is thought that something must be wrong with him. Perhaps he does not know where to turn, therefore he seeks religion.

Fortunately for the seekers and aspirants of the world, there are those great souls who are

their guides. If man's investigation into religion and its real application leads to any danger, would we not have been warned by men like Christ and Buddha and Sri Ramakrishna, men whose mission it was to convey to mankind something other than that with which we are ordinarily concerned? Human beings live the life given them, having some superficial answer to the question of why they live, but that is not enough. The illumined souls of our world have wanted to make us aware of what we really are, from where we come, what our possibilities are, and what we can discover within ourselves. They are the pathfinders into that realm which we regard with extreme caution and often with suspicion and fear. It is their direction and inspiration that assure us that we can be basically normal human beings, absolutely sound and sane, well-grounded within ourselves, and then reach out to That, the vast and the infinite.

God-consciousness is an awareness that you and I come to possess when our own religious life has taken a definite bent and we have made certain progress and arrived at certain goals. It is not an intellectual theory. We do not just say that we know that God is the basic Reality in our own existence or that our own individual existence is related to It. We know It. There is something beyond knowing with our mind. I bring in the word "feeling" though it has an implication which is so easily misunderstood; emotionalism enters into it. But feeling, in the sense that I mean, is the sum total of human emotions. It is something else.

What we recognize, what we know, we begin to realize within ourself and our own individual consciousness expands. It breaks the bounds within which it is held.

We know, from our own limited spiritual experience, how bound man is — that consciousness of his, how limited it is! Man — the individual soul — is like a bird in a cage, and he remains in the cage of his own consciousness. What am I going to wear tomorrow, what am I going to eat, what am I going to do, how can I fulfill my own hopes and dreams? So limited are our desires and aspirations! What is the world, what is all this? We cannot be interested in all these immediate trivialities from the real standpoint. Man must know himself. He must know his own capacity to break these bonds and take flight into the transcendental.

Do not view this with suspicion. Transcendentalism is not an intellectual pursuit. It is a spiritual venture. It is the soul's adventure into consciousness. And it must, when it has begun, reach a certain climax. It is at the climactic point that man may experience what we call *samadhi;* then he is no longer aware of the body, of the earth, of his immediate surroundings, of himself, of any of the knots and pegs that hamper him. He knows something other, and it is the Real.

The mystics and the great poets have occasional flight into the cosmic. Perhaps we cannot compare their experience with the superconscious state of a Ramakrishna, but it has its place. It is the foretaste of what the soul touches in its highest moments, its liberated state. Tennyson speaks of it:

"I have never had any revelations through anaesthetics, but a kind of waking trance — this for the lack of a better word — I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has come upon me through repeating my own name to myself, silently, till all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away in boundless being, and this not a confused state but the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words — when death was an almost laughable impossibility — the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life. I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said, the state is beyond words?"

This is what we often feel, the loss of individuality. What does it mean? Non-existence? Extinction? We are so like the bird in the cage — the cage, our security. Our consciousness is so confined by the physical and the mental that we are afraid to make the flight into the superconscious. We are afraid of losing our individuality. Because of our fear, because of our incapacity to let go of ourselves, we miss the beatitude, the freedom that cosmic consciousnes, God-consciousness holds for us.

This is not to say that we should sit still and wait until superconsciousness descends upon us. The superficial religious or the psychic might do just that. For a person to be a man of religion, he must be a man of spirit. He does not merely await those rare moments when he partakes of

the transcendental, but his aspiration is to make God-awareness so much a part of his consciousness that it can be part and parcel of his everyday life. It is in this manner he translates his superconsciousness. If one has even an inkling of spiritual life, has felt and known within himself the actuality of his own existence resting in the consciousness of God, he will not only desire those moments of beatitude but he will want, over and above all else, that consciousness to be habitual.

This is where the practical part enters in. Sri Ramakrishna talked of God; he sought the Reality unceasingly, and at any moment he could pass from the normal into the "supernormal" state. His superconscious state was the experience of God as all-in-all, the one Reality holding and sustaining all existence. Because that consciousness had entered into his own consciousness and his own consciousness had become part of it, he was able to translate it into his everyday life. So we do not discard him as a man of impractical hopes and dreams. We give him his rightful place among those who reveal to other men how they can become God-conscious.

We ask, how does one become God-conscious? It is by making God the center of consciousness. Analyze yourself. If you can be objective enough, you will find what is the center of your mind and consciousness. It is the "I" — the big ego; you have *self*-consciousness. This is what has to be altered. You must give to God — the Reality, Source of your own existence, counterpart of your own being, the Real Being — the place that you

are now giving your ego. Then all else will revolve around It. This is a technique that all spiritual seekers adopt in order to reach that highest state. They begin with implanting the awareness of God in their own consciousness so that from that point their individual consciousness may expand and express and change. And, believe me, if you are really interested in it, you will not be able to escape the turmoil of the early stages of spiritual life. I am telling you this because it is a fact. It is, as Sri Ramakrishna said, like letting a big elephant into a little muddy pool. Everything in the consciousness is stirred up by the process of clarification and unification that brings our life into focus and to true integration. Integration of the personality takes place when all its parts have become related to the Center of our being. By opening ourselves to the Source of our own life, our personality becomes the reflection of That. We are no longer the same, nor do we wish to be the same. A person who has known God-consciousness is not the same as he was before the experience. However, to be habitually in a state of God-awareness may take many years. We are so bound within the walls of our limitations that though we sometimes escape those walls, spontaneously we return to them. Still, do not be discouraged. In order to become established in that high state we must keep on struggling within our confines, striving to break through.

How may this be accomplished? By our habit of thought, by a constant upsurging of the spirit. A God-aspiring person has his being always turned

in a high direction; his mind is not held to earth and all its littleness. He is seeking the Vast, the Unbounded. In the words of the Upanishads, when man realizes that *Bhuma* — the Supreme Existence — is all he seeks, how can he any longer endure a life of bondage? He wants to be free and freedom comes to him through his own consciousness. Our best moments are those when we have no awareness of self or of anything that is concerned with it — when we know ourselves as God.

As we become God-conscious our relationship with all of life is altered. As men and women we see human faults and frailties, evil, darkness, sordidness; and we are affected and even overcome by these, but as God-conscious beings we see only that One. All that we saw before takes on a new complexion.

I know what some of you might say in argument: "Would you have us live in dreams and shadows? That is not realism. Why not see things as they are?" Of course, we are to see things "as they are;" we see through the colored glass of our own ignorance thus we think this or that is so. Sri Ramakrishna and Christ did not see through our colored glass. They had clear vision. They saw through their divine consciousness; therefore, they exclaimed, "Everything is God! Even the wicked man is God." Spiritual realities are facts and once they have made their place in our life there can be no doubt about it. This is the reason the Upanishads say that when a man comes to realization, the knots of his heart are cut asunder, his doubts are dissolved, and all his imperfections are reduced to nothingness.

It would be wonderful if we could remain in that consciousness habitually, but we do not. Even the greatest return from their flights into the superconscious. Sri Ramakrishna tells of himself, how he went from one world to another quite naturally: he would no longer be aware of the body, of people, of things, of desires, of all that with which he played, as it were, here on earth; yet how often he had to use these as the means to draw his mind back to the normal plane so that he could fulfill his mission in the world. We should find comfort in this. It should make us realize the normalcy of that which appears superhuman. The highest attainment is possible to us, and if we are fortunate enough to have even a glimpse of it, we shall not be disturbed human beings unfit for normal living. This should be of utmost concern to us: normalcy in spiritual living, balance in our seeking. Of what use is the person who goes dreaming through life in the name of spirituality? He is merely indulging in his own idiosyncrasies and selfishness. Oh no, the dreamers and the idealists will have to strike a balance by translating their dreams into practical life so they can impart something to others.

From the individual who has attained the highest consciousness we receive a form of service. He makes us aware of That which is hidden from us, and with that awareness there comes into our life a floodtide of peace. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." We live too much by the world. We must learn to live by God so that we may rise above the turmoil and tribulation of everyday

life. God-consciousness has to be realized. If we seek in the proper way we shall not be misled. When we attain, we shall be of great service to mankind. By our petty thoughts and personal desires we only add weight to the world; we add turmoil to turmoil, confusion to confusion, doubt to doubt. But when our own inner life becomes established in God we have something else to give. Let us aim at this, hope for it, desire it. We must make the moments which we give to spiritual practice have real meaning in our life. If we persist, if we are sincere, if we do not play a game and are not hypocritical, realization cannot be withheld from us.

We go from height to height, from level to other levels. There are degrees in illumination; there are degrees of realization. We can have partial illumination; we can have flashes of divine vision; but let us not think that we have become fully illuminated. A passing experience is passing but should not be underestimated since such an experience can so work in our life that in time our habitual consciousness becomes lighted with That which we have known in one precious moment. In this manner we make religion a thing of the spirit. God becomes a vital part of our consciousness. He becomes the supreme factor in our life and we revolve around Him. Our actions, our thoughts, our expressions all move from the center outward and they carry the imprints, the impress of what we have touched within.

You are that One. I am that One. If we really want to become God-conscious, we can. Becoming

God-conscious we lose nothing, so let us not have such fears. Let us be bigger, better, freer, more exalted human beings. It is true what the sages say. He is bliss, He is knowledge, He is existence. When we become consciously related to Him, we are more alive, more blissful; and as for knowledge, we have the key to everything in the universe. We have become It. That is why the Upanishads proclaim: "The knower of Brahman, becomes Brahman."

REALIZATION

by Swami Paramananda

Where have I seen this face?
I thought and thought, and thought yet again,
Trying in vain to join the fragments
of my life's broken memories.
I looked with my mind's searching eyes
both far and near;
But alas! with no avail.
This strange knowing and not knowing
kept me stirred day and night
with fever of longing.

"Be still! Strain thou thy mind no more,"
spake a voice from an unseen depth:
"Close thine eyes, they see not the true;
come thou with me."

Thus a gentle hand led me to a noiseless land.
Its cooling scented breeze soothed all my
inner anguish.
Lo! I stood before a crystal lake
In whose limped waters I saw — and I knew.

Spiritual efforts without sincere love for God are fruitless.

Wherever there is devotion, know for certain that the grace of the Lord is there. External worship and things of that sort are just means to an end.

A true devotee asks nothing of God but pure love for Him. Even as a child depends entirely upon its mother, so the devout soul depends entirely upon God.

The more you call upon God the nearer you will be to Him. Overflowing devotion is the only condition of His grace.

You cannot realize God through struggle, sacrifice, charity or study. He alone can realize Him on whom His grace descends.

Everything depends upon the grace of God — even our desire for spiritual practice. Eventually His vision too comes as a result of His blessing.

All aspirants after God-realization, be they followers of the path of knowledge or devotion, must practice meditation and repetition of holy names. Every aspirant after God-realization must have a constant remembrance of the Lord; and the chief means of doing this is the repetition of His holy name with love and reverence.

Of all the means of purification and spiritual realization, meditation tops the list. Constant and continuous remembrance of God makes us whole.

Kindle the fire of renunciation in your heart and plunge yourself into His maddening love. Then alone spiritual experience comes. First install Him on the altar of your heart. When you succeed in that, you will find Him installed everywhere outside.

If you meditate on God with form, He will reveal to you His real nature . . . It is very difficult to meditate on the formless . . . There is no question of inferiority or superiority in this; it is a question of temperament. Whatever appeals to one is the best for him . . . God is both with form and without form, and again beyond both . . . Everything is He.

. . . The spiritual aspirant should make the practice of meditation a regular habit. The early hour is the best time for spiritual practices. The sacred hours before sunrise are better than any other time of day or night for the practice of inwardness.

It is difficult to turn the course of our mind toward God after it has been steeped in worldliness for so long, but if you are resolute in meditating on Him it will change. The Lord is most merciful. He rejects no prayer. Be regular and sincere in your daily meditation and never allow despair to overwhelm your mind.

Failures are stepping stones to success. Viewing success and failure alike, work on with unwavering faith in Him and victory will be yours in the end. I only pray that your surrender may be complete.

Be like the arrow that darts from the bow. Be like the hammer that falls on the anvil. Be like the sword that pierces its object. The arrow does not murmur if it misses the target. The hammer does not fret if it falls on a wrong place. And the sword does not lament if it is broken in the hands of its wielder. Yet there is a joy in being made, used, and broken; and an equal joy in being finally set aside.

The only way to lasting peace is complete surrender to the will of God. Restlessness destroys all peace of mind. When the mind becomes restless one should pray earnestly to God, for He alone is the abode of peace. Constant recollection of God will bring an overflowing blessedness.

FOR INSPIRATION

by Michelangelo

(TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH)

The prayers I make then be sweet indeed,
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray;
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
Which of its native self can nothing feed;
Of good and pious works Thou art the seed
Which quickens where Thou say'st it may;
Unless Thou show us then Thine own true way,
No man can find! Father, Thou must lead!
Do thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread:
The fetters of my tongue do thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of Thee
And sound Thy praises everlastingly.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A HINDU

by Swami Parampanthi

The quest of the Hindu has been, down the ages, for the universal and the eternal. The Upanishads, the oldest scriptures of the Hindus, reflect with vivid poignancy the restless search of the Indian spirit for the fundamental essence of man, of nature and God. Ideally Hinduism is not a geographical expression; it is a unique belief in man's identity with a supreme Spirit, and the awareness of this identity is potentially present in all human beings irrespective of creed and race, time and clime. A Hindu believes that every atom in this universe is permeated by one Reality which manifests Itself in multiplicity. He believes that the soul of man is identical with that Reality and that the ultimate goal of life is to realize this inalienable heritage.

Thus, to be a Hindu is to unhesitatingly believe in the presence of God in and through all things — material, human and spiritual. It is to visualize in creation a meaningful pattern and to be aware that there is a progressive unfoldment of divinity in the evolution of all beings and things. Yet, to a Hindu, the creation in time and space is not an eternal evolution; but rather it is cyclic — in the sense that each cycle represents a temporal process, subject to creation, dissolution and recreation. In other words, creation is not eternal in the same sense that God is eternal, because creation's eternity is not absolute but follows a law of perpetual recurrence. In this sense alone a Hindu

refuses to put the universe in the same category with God. The universe and God cannot coexist as independent factors; the universe is a tiny fraction of God's manifestation and exists in God as a limited, subservient, projected component. It is not real in the same sense that God is real.

Therefore, according to the Indian ideal, the exhaustive totality of the created world is to be transcended by the aspiring soul; the human goal is spiritual and mystical. Yet in this assertion there is no denial of values pertaining to the world and to human aspiration in the pursuit of the normal and natural objectives of life. The attempt is made, however, to put the worldy values and commitments in graphic contrast to the higher, transcendental aims of life, throwing into bold relief the proper perspectives of both sets of values. This introduces a right awareness of proportion and a sense of a balanced harmony of life.

A Hindu does not idealize the universe by seeking the supreme end of life only on earth; he does not long for a Utopia in time and space thus forgetting the inevitable limitations of created things and of nature. His vision is not earthbound. In this sense, his approach is realistic and existential and serves two purposes: it reveals the degrees of values in life and aspiration, and it forces him to be aware of his limitations. Thus it becomes an incentive for constant betterment. The awareness of the world as it is, with its glory and its limitations, and the realization of man's imperfection are essential to set in motion a process of improvement and perfection. Therefore, the Hindu visual-

izes the movement of the world as God's projection in time and space for man's spiritual unfoldment. He believes that society must be organized upon the basis of religion and truth and that each person should fulfill his duty in the given situations of life for the unfoldment of the spirit. A Hindu does not then belittle social values. He is not blind to the natural, normal urges of body and mind. He believes that nature and circumstance dictate the duty of any given person, and he maintains that each person must move according to his own nature and the specific patterns of obligation that are his in life. Each person's duty and vocation, if followed with sincerity and devotion, can lead him to the highest goal of life — to God-realization. Though a Hindu takes into account the values of natural life, of society, of the beauty and multiformity of creation, of the magic and charm of things, he cannot turn his back to the fact that physical incarnation is a bondage, that the dualism of joy and pain, birth and death somehow have to be transcended. Seeking a release from this chain of recurrent birth and death, he feels a constant dissatisfaction, a persistent longing for the bliss of God-union. And this aspiration cannot in any way be considered escapism, because his quest for infinity is carried beyond worldly responsibility only when he has fully discharged that responsibility.

The urge of the Hindu to know God is the constant theme of his life from the cradle to the grave. He believes that life is essentially spiritual and that man must constantly try to cultivate an

increasing awareness of Spirit. To facilitate the fulfillment of this highest of aims two basic paths are prescribed: the path of self-expression and the path of self-withdrawal. The first is for the average person who passes through the four natural periods of life until he reaches the state of complete renunciation. It is the path of gradual withdrawal from mundane life, first allowing expression to normal urges of body and mind. The second path is recommended for those exceptional people who early in life become spiritual aspirants as monks. The self-discipline of this path, however, must not be a forceful suppression or self-mortification; true self-discipline is the result of a living process of spontaneous growth of the spirit in man. The ultimate aim of all people is to know God. Some people follow a longer path; others shorter ones.

Hinduism visualizes every individual as a product of the past, molding in the present his own future. Thus life stretches backward into the distant past, encompassing the present and holding an infinite future for the purpose of spiritual evolution. This introduces the doctrines of karma and rebirth which are main pillars of Hindu religion. These doctrines maintain that each man's present is the cumulative result of the past actions; the actions of the past spontaneously produce the conditions of the present birth, the physical and mental make-up, the parents and early environment. He begins his life with the things given unto him as a result of his own past, but what he does with them is his own responsi-

bility; he makes his own choices. The past impressions remain as inclinations and promptings; they never assume any compulsive force in the present life. So, the individual is basically the maker of his own destiny.

The supreme absolute Godhead, from the Hindu viewpoint, has two aspects. One is a precosmic aspect in which God is beyond creation, beyond name and form, beyond all polarities and dualisms of life, beyond change and diversity. He is nondual, indivisible and attributeless. But God has also a creative aspect: by the cosmic medium of maya He projects the universe in time and space. (The creative force of God is maya.) A Hindu also believes that God, who is basically impersonal, formless and infinite, from time to time expresses Himself in human form in order to redeem mankind, to show the way, by example, to spiritual illumination. God may have manifestation in countless forms, and we can worship Him as the personal God in the living symbols of Divinity or by establishing a relationship with some one of the world saviors. This is why a Hindu has equal tolerance and reverence for the worship of the images of the numerous aspects of Godhead — the approach to God through symbols — and the contemplation on the impersonal aspect of Godhead. Tolerance and universality are two basic characteristics of the Hindu; therefore, he does not believe in converting people from one religion to another. He believes in the efficacy and validity of all religions, in the divinity of all the saviors and scriptures of the world. Religion to him is basically

a matter of inner spiritual experience, where all differences between man and man, religion and religion, are wiped out. He knows that religion must function through forms which differ from race to race, country to country, and he never forgets that all religions are paths leading to the selfsame Goal.

Spirituality is the perennial theme of a Hindu's life. It is not an empty abstraction, not merely a matter of logic or speculative table talk about God. Religion is his very life-breath; so, he believes that philosophy in action is religion, that there must be a constant coordination of thought and action in his daily life. Religion is a matter of transformation; and to a Hindu the gateway to transformation, to spiritual bliss is through initiation by a religious teacher. Religion is not acquired by book-learning; it has to be transmitted to the disciple by an enlightened teacher, a guru, who denotes not mere booklearning but shows the way according to the capacity of the disciple — his ability, training and aptitude. Each individual is different, so the path of each is also different; and the real guru is he who knows what path one should follow. Therefore a dedicated disciple finds a guru and is given a specific path to follow which is suitable to his nature. Whatever may be the path of the disciple, certain preconditions are expected of him: self-control, purity of body and mind, sincerity of purpose and faith in the guru. Each individual has to rediscover the truth for himself. Truth is always existing, but it has to be integrated with the springs of action and aspiration in the

individual in order to transform him. This is done progressively by three methods of learning: hearing the Truth from the lips of the guru, reflecting upon what has been heard, and finally contemplating what has been heard and reflected upon.

A Hindu visualizes the individual as a meaningful unit whose fate and destiny are governed by his own free actions; God's grace is dependent upon his own endeavor. However, an individual isolated from the cosmic current is nothing but a tiny, helpless, ephemeral being doomed to pass away sooner or later; as the inseparable part of one divine whole he is unique, powerful, and eternally indestructible. All things have meaning and power only in relation to the one cosmic background and origin.

All fundamental principles such as goodness, truth and beauty are not merely intellectual theories but the inherent qualities of the supreme Reality. Thus, the source of all our moral, ethical and spiritual laws is in Godhead. There is no irreconcilable dichotomy between the material and the spiritual to an aspirant who has felt the permeation of God everywhere. He believes in the validity, as well as the limitation, of the logical and rational approach to religion. Spirituality is beyond logic but it is not anti-logical. Nevertheless, intuition and contemplation, and finally absorption into the Supreme, are better ways than a rational and intellectual attitude, in the domain of spirit. A Hindu believes that day to day existence must be guided by the highest principles of life. This requires respect to superiors, honesty and morality

in public and private life, adherence to ethical codes of conduct, the inviolability of marriage, reverence for tradition, kindness, affection, love, and a spirit of detachment.

Firmly convinced that one can work out his own salvation in this very life by his own endeavor, with the grace of God and the guru, Hinduism not only presents a philosophy but also outlines specific paths which have proven their intrinsic value through the centuries. Divinity is rooted in the very being of man and each man must confront his spiritual destiny fearlessly and alone. Constant remembrance of our divine heritage is advocated. For this reason a Hindu, however humble he may be, creates a shrine in his home where he spends some part of each day and night chanting, singing the Lord's name, praying and meditating. He then tries to retain his worshipful mood throughout the day. This gives him the courage to face the battles of life — poverty, adversity and all mundane affairs of daily life. Though study of the scriptures, association with the holy, visiting places of pilgrimage, fasting on special occasions, and ritualistic worship of God are also recommended to him, he always knows that these are only means to the one ultimate end — namely God-realization.

In spite of an emphasis upon the transcendental side of life, the Hindu does not preach a doctrine of world-negation; he preaches rather a doctrine of the relativity of the world against the background of absolute Existence. The universe is not an end in itself; it is the training ground of the soul. In this sense the Hindu view of the world

is very realistic, almost photographic, for life is seen and accepted as it is.

The concept of sin as we know it is absent in Indian philosophy. The human imperfections such as greed, vice, hatred and violence, are due to man's ignorance of his own intrinsic worth, his real Essence. Pain and suffering, and nature's catastrophes which cannot be explained on the basis of law of karma, are the results of the inherent limitations of creation in time and space. Creation, or projection, implies separation from the divine origin; hence, the limitation expressing itself as death, disease and destruction is an inseparable component of creation. The fire that burns one man's house is the same fire that cooks his neighbor's dinner, or saves another man's life in some cold region of the earth. Thus, the forces and circumstances which are usually called sin or evil or suffering, are visualized as either the ersult of man's own actions or as the imperfections of creation itself. That is why, though the Hindu pantheon has innumerable gods and goddesses, it has not one god of evil or sin.

A Hindu is neither pessimistic nor optimistic. He is objectively aware of the good and bad points of the universe and of his own nature. He is shown how the bad points can be eliminated and the good points developed. To repeat: the ultimate purpose of man's life is to gain God-consciousness, and the Hindu is ever conscious that the conditions for the attainment of this are in man himself. He can reach the supreme Goal provided he strives for it with sincerity and perseverence.

MEDITATION

by Sister Devamata

The aim of meditation is to enable us to make spiritual ideals a reality. The mind is constantly distracted by the world. We do not know how to listen to the Voice which would answer all our questions, remove all our doubts, and soothe our hearts. We must learn in some way to drown out the distractions of our mind. This is done through meditation, when our mind's faculty is whole, one-pointed, when our senses are not engaged in following unrealities but are withdrawn and turned with conscious effort to that which is Real.

We must learn to look within. We must control the outgoing forces and make our mind single-pointed. Until we do that, we can never reach our deeper nature, our innermost being. Meditation opens the channel whereby we enter into the inner realm. When we enter into deep meditation we feel nourished; we feel joy — a sign that we have tasted the real meaning of meditation. It must come to us for this is the aim of spiritual living.

We must feel that the spiritual life is as real as our present one. We can do this by cultivating a habit of meditation on the supreme Being day after day, keeping a fixed hour. If we neglect this and are carried away by hunger of the senses, we are starved and our heart remains unsatisfied. The feeling of the reality of the spiritual life, the realization of God, comes rapidly to those who strive with earnestness, faith, purity, and cheerfulness of heart. Steadfastness, discrimination and

will power are needed in order to pull out of the doubts and fears which, in the beginning, often hold us back. We must give up all littleness and cultivate selflessness. The more we disentangle ourselves from the little self, the more quickly we can travel and unfold our spiritual nature.

When the mind is well concentrated, well established in the bliss of the One then we have transcended the earthly plane. When we have attained the Supreme and can spontaneously direct ourselves towards that state without any break, then we know It. Thus the sages, saints and pure souls feel the presence of God. They see His beauty everywhere for He is the living Soul. Being conscious of That, man becomes free.

All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifieth Allah; and He is the Mighty, the Wise. . . .

He is the First and the Last, and the Outward and the Inward; He is the Knower of all things.

He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six days; then He mounted the Throne.

He knoweth all that entereth the earth and all that emergeth therefrom and all that cometh down from the sky and all that ascendeth therein; and He is with you wheresoever ye may be. And Allah is Seer of that ye do.

His is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, and unto Allah all things are brought back.

He causeth the night to pass into the day, and He causeth the day to pass into the night, and He is Knower of all that is the breasts.

—*The Koran*

SUFISM IN THE WEST

by Astrid Setterwall Angstrom

Love is as the water of the Ganges.
It is in itself a purification.

—INAYAT KHAN

As I made my way out from the diningroom of the Clark Hotel in Benares, I noticed on a table a small book with a black binding. It was *Gayan, Notes from the Unstruck Music,* by Inayat Khan. I had previously been introduced to the white-haired English lady who was at the table. "It is the first time I've seen this book since I arrived in India," I said. "It is here," she answered, "because I was one of the first disciples of the author."

We found two undisturbed seats on the veranda. This was his country. It was appropriate that we should spend an evening exchanging reminiscences. "Where did you know him?" was her immediate question. "In Stockholm which he visited in the fall of 1926." At her request I told her how it happened:

"We consented at the desire of friends to give up the house, into which we had just moved, to an Indian who wished to give a talk one evening in a private family. Thus it was arranged that this unknown Indian would have dinner with some neighbors and later be accompanied by them to our house. He arrived in Stockholm some days before. A lecture was announced in a small hall. My neighbor and I went there so that we would be able to welcome him as our guest. His lecture was

about Jalalu'd Din Rumi, the Sufi saint of the twelfth century. Only a few people had come. In my recollection the lecturer was a tall, rather heavy man with long curls and a flowing dark beard with streaks of grey. His eyes were a little slanting. His personality seemed strangely impressive. But why did he talk in that almost too unsophisticated way? We all knew about those Persian poets. We had studied history of literature and read the poems of Hafiz and Omar Khayam. Could it be that he was underrating us? This was the reaction of some who were present. Still, there was something in his talk that lingered and suggested that it might be worth while to hear more of what he had to say. Later I understood this was his way of reaching the few. He did not want to attract those who came only to listen to a brilliant lecture, but those who remained when the disappointed ones had left.

"Thus it was that Pir-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan came to our house. I had been informed beforehand that if there were a child in the house he visited he usually expressed a wish to see it. Our two-year-old daughter was already in bed. Would she perhaps be frightened to see a dark stranger enter her room? Oh, no! She stretched her arms to him uttering the only word she knew in a foreign tongue, 'Darling.' He gave her a bright responding smile and stroked her golden curls. As a mother I sensed his tenderness toward the child — as if it were the expression of a great impersonal, all-embracing love.

"We had added to the house a library to enter

which one had to mount two steps. It was all panelled with selected wood and the walls were lined with books, mostly on art and philosophy. It was the sanctuary of the home. Our guest mentioned he felt a congenial atmosphere and would like to address the audience from there. Between thirty and forty persons were present. We sat in the living room on chairs, on cushions, on rugs and listened to that unknown man from the East. His subject for the evening has not remained in my memory, probably because I watched him more than listened to his words. I saw that his glance dwelt in turn upon each one. When the talk was over there were some questions and many went up to him, engaging him in conversation. I asked him to sing for us but he declined saying that he had given up singing because he found that people very rarely had the right understanding of this special way of singing which was meant to awaken the soul. I noticed that he pointed out a few persons to his secretary who then asked them if they would come to his hotel for a private interview. Several felt shy and withdrew. A few accepted.

"Attracted by the strange dignity of his countenance I asked if I would be allowed to make a sketch of him. He was interested in this and I spent several afternoons with him at the Grand Hotel in the same suite where Tagore had stayed only a few years before. Our talks turned out to be of a very personal nature. I learned about the Sufi way of life that he was teaching, and I realized then — and more later on — that I was privileged

to be in the presence of one of the 'message-bearers.' His fine humor and his merry laughter made it all seem natural. I remember remarking that I felt drawn to the Sufi teaching because it stressed beauty; but I found it an exclusive philosophy, only for those who were real seekers after the high values of life. His answer was: 'Yes, so much is done for the masses, in many ways. But just think of the intellectuals, the so-called educated people! Their minds are in dire need, need of guidance in their search.' Considering the very few that had come to his lectures and the scarce publicity he had received in Sweden, I said I felt sorry he should have had to come all this way for so little. He looked at me in a very quiet way and pointed out that it was not so. His purpose of coming was fulfilled. The vibration was put in motion.

"There was already one *mureed,* disciple, in Stockholm. She became the one to gather to regular classes the few who had been initiated during the short visit of the teacher, the *Murshid."*

The little old English lady was a sympathetic listener: "I was one of his first disciples," she said again. "I think my strongest impression of him was his gentleness. He was so gentle and so full of mercy! I do not think," she went on, as if searching for words to render exactly what she wanted to say, "that he realized before he came how very little of spiritual unfoldment there was in the Western countries. He found the intellectuality developed, but the culture of the inner life was missing. He found a love for freedom but the soul

bound to life on earth. That, I feel, was a great difficulty for him."

We were silent. The Indian night enfolded us — full of sounds from rickshaw boys, stamping of horses, talk, soft floating melodies. And later on when all was silent we were swept into a stillness, from which rose in my mind these words by Rumi: "The bamboo-flute! What is it the flute says that makes it appeal to you? Why does it mourn? It mourns because of separation from its origin. It mourns for the day when it was one with the whole bamboo-tree; it mourns for the peace it once enjoyed."

We did not relate our remembrances any more. Convinced that the other would understand, we each uttered a sentence now and then. One said, "He was born in Baroda in 1882. It is told that he came from a family of many saints, poets and musicians. In every generation there is said to have been at least one mystic. The grandfather, Moula Bekhs, in whose house philosophers of all schools met with scientists, writers and musicians, seems to have meant very much to Inayat Khan. I have also heard it said that his destiny was foretold by a yogi who came to their town. The boy, Inayat, visited him. As long as others were present the yogi ignored him. But when they were alone he greeted him: 'welcome Mahatma!' and he foretold that this boy should bring the ancient wisdom of the Sufis to the West. From their boyhood on Inayat Khan, his younger brother, Maheboob, and their cousin Ali Khan always kept together and looked upon themselves as three brothers."

The other said, "The grandfather had done much to revive Indian music and Inayat Khan continued his work. He went all through India, was met with great honor and was beloved for his singing and poetry. He became known in wide circles and was well received at the courts of the maharajas. The Nizam of Hyderabad, who was a Sufi, appreciated his art so much that he gave him the name of 'Tansen' after the great Indian singer."

After a long silence the voice of one of us rose quietly again, "Wherever he went in India he visited holy men. He was also here in the sacred city of Benares. He felt especially drawn to the Sufis. It has been related to me that one day as he meditated at the grave of a Sufi saint, he heard a dervish singing, 'Awake from sleep, oh man! Thou knowest not that death lieth in wait for thee every moment. Thou knowest neither the weight nor the burden thou hast to carry — not even how long the road is. Awake, oh man! The sun is rising!' Then it was revealed to him that music was the means, not the goal. The goal was the fulfillment of the inner life."

The other spoke, "And so he found his Murshid, Syed Abu Hashim Madani who imparted his wisdom to him and who told him on his deathbed that he was the one who would have to bring the Sufi message of love, harmony and beauty to the Western world.

The English lady opened the book that I had seen on the diningroom table and began to read:

"Thy light hath illumined the dark chambers of my mind; Thy love is rooted in the depths of

my heart; Thine own eyes are the light of my soul; Thy power worketh behind my action; Thy peace alone is my life's repose . . .

"Thy music causeth my soul to dance; in the murmurs of the wind I hear Thy flute; the waves of the sea keep the rhythm of my dancing steps. Through the whole of nature I hear Thy music played, my Beloved; my soul while dancing speaketh of its joy in song."

She closed the *Notes of the Unstruck Music.* After a while she spoke again, "From this setting of glowing holiness, in which he was born, from this position of musical recognition and fame, he tore himself away and went with his brothers to the West. Friends, relatives and other music lovers tried to dissuade them and begged them to stay. India herself wanted them. But, responding to the inner call, they left Bombay on the thirteenth of September, 1910. This day, which is called *Hajrat*-day, is always kept in remembrance in the Sufi centers of the West. The brothers arrived in New York where they had no friends, no contacts and very little money. Those who knew them at that time have told that they often did not know if they would have anything to eat the next day. They began their activities with music but found that their sacred music was looked upon either as entertainment only or as an ethnographical curiosity. In San Francisco," she continued, "they were met by two followers of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Trigunatitananda and Swami Paramananda, who invited Hazrat Inayat Khan to speak at the Hindu Temple. With eager generosity these

two Indian pioneers did him a good turn. Through the Vedanta Society that they represented it was arranged for him to deliver a series of lectures on Sufism. This opened the way. Soon the first small Sufi center was formed."

The old lady seemed lost for a while in thoughts of those days that she had so often heard about. But she gathered herself together again and now her memories became personal: "Before they left for Europe the fourth brother, the youngest, Musharaff Khan had joined them. They travelled to many countries and founded groups and centers; but it was in France that they met with the greatest sympathy and understanding for Indian philosophy and musical art. And so Murshid — as I used to call him, for to me there never was another Murshid — settled down with his American wife and family in Suresnes near Paris. There a summer school was held annually. For ten years the work was kept going without an organization. Then the need of a structure was felt, and the International Headquarters was instituted at Geneva. I met Hazrat Inayat Khan in England and was his ardent mureed for many years. After he came back to India in 1926 and gave up his body, I had no desire to remain in Europe. I settled down in Benares where I still study Buddhistic scriptures from which Sufism derived much in its early stages. I feel the drive within never to stop before the goal is reached, and I dive into the realm of lofty thinking. No place is so suited for that kind of life as this ancient city."

With the memories of the days of her spiritual

awakening and quickening still lingering in her smile, she sat silent for a long, long time. Then, almost with an effort she resumed her talk, "And now, tell me please of the brother Maheboob, who became the successor with the title of Shaik-Ul-Mashaik after the death of the founder. And tell me of Ali Khan, the singer and the healer. I knew them only when they were very young."

I tried to meet her request as well as I could: "India has had the same pull on me as on you. I have studied Vedanta philosophy since I was very young. It was in Stockholm, during the period in my life when my children were raised, that I met the India that the Sufi leaders represented. Maheboob Khan was a quiet man of slender build, a composer and a singer — a man with a great human understanding. He was endowed with an inner joy, of which those who came in close contact with him partook in abundance. He had the refined manner of one who is saturated with love.

"The two brothers visited Sweden many times. Surely you remember Murshid Ali Khan's rich tenor voice that was trained both in the Eastern and Western ways of singing. He gave public concerts in Stockholm several times, and we were also fortunate to listen to him in our own homes and in those of friends. He had a way of singing that impressed everyone. Not only did his voice have great volume and an unusually rich timbre, but the performance itself was an exquisite work of art! On evenings with just a few around he would sing ancient Hindu songs of devotion to Krishna or to the Ganges. There would be no

instrument to accompany him, but those present would perhaps be required to hold the ground note softly while he sang the variations on the theme. When he would end a service or an evening in a home with the last poem that Hazrat Inayat wrote, he rendered it as an offering, as an act of devotion, and the listeners were deeply affected.

"We had the opportunity to behold a selfless service to an ideal. The two brothers expressed the thoughts of the one who had passed; they sang his songs and they lived in such close communion with him even after his passing that it seemed as if they were not separate individuals but aspects or one great personality.

"You ask me to tell you of Murshid Ali Khan, who carried on as the leader when Shaik-Ul-Mashaik passed away in 1948! But how can I tell of the subtle ways of such a mystic, whose mind had long ceased to flutter and was stilled and restful? Divine love flowed from him and reacted on the minds of the mureeds. Their values of life were changed in an imperceptible way that later became definite and obvious. His very presence had a healing effect. In his clear simple way he stated that the secret of this healing power was that there was never a shadow of a doubt in his mind. He used to give massage to put the body in tune just as one tunes an instrument. He would quote the words of Inayat Kahn, 'I am coming from a perfect Source and I am bound for a perfect Goal. The light of the perfect Being is kindled in my soul. I live, move and have my being in God, and nothing in the world of the past or the present

has power to touch me if I rise above it. You should say to yourself, every ray of the sun cures me; the air heals me; the food I take has its effect on me; with every breath, I inhale something that is healing, purifying and bringing to me a perfect health.'

"My own life," I continued, "has taken me to different parts of the world. Often on coming back to Europe I would stop in Geneva or in The Hague. Sometimes Murshid Ali Khan would cook a meal for me or arrange a musical evening. But first of all I would experience that deep impersonal friendship that would even touch the personal. In his conversation he would sometimes return to the pioneer time and tell again how when Hazrat Inayat Khan gave his first Sunday address the only listeners were the family. 'Today,' he said, 'the Sufi message seems to be in its infancy. But it will not remain so. One cannot stop Truth. It will make its way as water does . . . '

"The last time I saw Murshid Ali Khan in Stockholm he was aging and his health was failing. As often before, I had to be his interpreter. He related an episode from *Mesnavi:* Shams Tabriz, who is referred to as the Sun of Tabriz or the Shiva of Persia, was Rumi's teacher. He was entreated one day to awaken the Crown Prince from the sleep of death. The Shah had issued a decree that if there were any truth in religion his only son must be restored to life by prayer, otherwise all mosques would be destroyed. Shams Tabriz complied and sought out the dead body and said to it: Awake at the call of Allah! It did not

move. He repeated the same command. Nothing happened Then, seized by ecstacy he called: Awake at *My* command! The Prince rose. What was it that had happened? At first Shams Tabriz spoke conventionally of God as a third person, outside of himself, but when he lost himself in such ecstacy that he was One with the Divine, then Shams Tabriz existed no more as an individual and his word had the divine power. The story goes on to tell that although this command restored the boy, the religious law at the time was that one who claimed to be God should be flogged alive. And Shams Tabriz let it be done. 'Why,' Murshid Ali Kahn concluded, 'he was already gone, he was merged in the One!'

"This story, told in such a quiet way was deeply moving. It indicated to some of us that the final grand experience was at hand.

"The news of Pir-O-Murshid Ali Khan's passing at the age of seventy-seven, reached me in a far away country where I was then living.

"The head of the Sufi Order is now the youngest brother, Musharaff Kahn, who lives in The Hague."

The long quiet evening of remembrances in Benares, the holy place of pilgrimage in India, had come to an end.

Simple were we and all one essence: we were knotless and pure as water.
When that goodly Light took shape, it became many, like shadows cast by a battlement.
Demolish the dark battlement, and all difference will vanish from amidst this multitude.

—Jalalu'l-Din Rumi

THE WORLD-MIND

*by Paul Brunton**

If, as Bacon says, anyone merely scratches the surface of philosophy he may become an atheist. But if he digs a deep shaft into it he will become completely convinced of God's existence. Since a crystal, a flower, and a human body all follow the same law of development by stages, and since these stages and their forms show an intelligence behind them infinitely beyond that of man's, he who denies its existence is emotionally prejudiced rather than intellectually penetrative. If he could consider without such prejudice and deeply enough the nature and usefulness of the four seasons, the creative power of the sun, and the travels of the planets, he would have to add law to this intelligent rulership of the universe. There is no chance in all these things. If anyone considers all the evidence of intention of life here and on the stars out there, and fails to come to the belief that a higher power directs all, if he comes only to atheism, it is because the mind with which he considers this evidence is already closed by bias or ill-balanced by emotion or upset by suffering or too extraverted by the body's senses or faulty in some other way.

The world is not bereft, like a corpse, of life and sense. It has both. There is within and behind every bit of it, even when undiscerned by us, a directing Mind, a governing Spiritual principle.

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*From **The Spiritual Crisis of Man,** published by E. P. Dutton & Co., used with permission of the author.

This everywhere-present principle of life and the creative cosmic power are one and the same — God. In both stars and men we see the sign or evidence of its incomparable intelligence and unbelievable omnipotence. Its laws are ever present but human sense knows them only by the effects they produce in this world of form, time, and space. If the universe were quite lawless, if universal events and movements, such as the sun's rising and the seed's growth, happened in a merely haphazard way, it could hardly go on with its existence. Even those microscopically tiny organisms we call cells, out of which plant, animal, and human bodies are built up, contain latently and will develop eventually the mentality and characteristics of man himself. And this they will do in conformity with a perfect pattern, by orderly stages and through millions of rebirths.

Nothing that has happened in the world's history could ever have happened except by the ultimate sanction of the will and wisdom of the Universal Mind. Without this key to guide the reason, human thought would have to attribute what happens to mere chance. The universe would then seem senseless, fortune appear grossly unjust, and living itself mere folly. Life in every kingdom of Nature would then indeed be the play of brute, mechanical, and blind forces, as the materialist thinks. But with this key we can discern amid all this chaotic turmoil, that there is a divine purpose behind human existence, a rational order within the universe itself, and a beneficent Mind as the real ruler of both. With it we can find

some meaning in all existence and still more in human existence. This will no longer look like an insignificant speck of transient foam on the ocean but rather like the first faint glow of an eternal light.

Let no one impugn the infinite wisdom of the universal Mind merely because it is beyond his finite understanding or because evil and pain anger him. Could such a one have predicted, after seeing under a microscope and without prior knowledge, the minute piece of protoplasmic jelly, that it would grow into an adult man possessed of the capacity to think, to love, and to worship? Yet every plant, every living animal shows forth the presence of cosmic intelligence in the progressive stages from seed to flower, from fetus to full-size creature. These stages are too wisely and obviously organized with and for the end in view to be the result of mere chance. The evolutionary process is as inevitable, however slow, as the sun's return. Nothing is, or is to be, left out, for every atom is alive and has the germ of self-consciousness. The old sharp division between dead inert matter and living active cells is out-of-date and dissolving in the new knowledge of electronics. There is no energy anywhere and no object which is not in essence a form under which the World-Mind's Life Current appears. The material of our fleshly robes was once mineral, later plant and animal, and is now human. Man's body is Nature's crucible; his thought, her transmuting power. Unfoldment from the physical to the spiritual states necessitates passage through these three

kingdoms, through different planets and through the human form, where the fires of self-consciousness lit in prior evolutions work their wondrous magic. Even more, just as the cells in his body are affected by what he does to and with it as well as by what he thinks mentally and feels emotionally, so man himself is affected by what the planet is doing to him. For it has its own individual goal toward which it is evolving, and because of which it slowly or abruptly changes the conditions for the living forms in all kingdoms dwelling on and in its body.

The life-force in man could not have expressed human intelligence if there were not universal intelligence behind it, nor human spirituality if there were not a universal spirit to prompt it. A leading British biologist, Sir J. Arthur Thomson, affirms, "After a long circuit there is a return to the old truth: in the beginning was Mind."

No man has ever shown the same degree of intelligence and artistry which Nature shows. The technical skill which has gone into the building of the human body is something to be wondered at, first in awe and then in reverence. Whoso calls this skill "blind force" and does not perceive the living intelligence behind it, thereby reveals his own intellectual blindness. The infinite intelligence reveals itself on every side to seeing eyes and thoughtful minds. Medically trained men need never have become the agnostics and atheists so many of them formerly became if they had observed more intuitively the numerous signs of a supervising higher force in the birth of the

human body, the evolution of the human fetus, and the activities of the human blood. They had no right to assume, for instance, that because the involuntary events which occur in the nervous system lie outside the field of personal awareness, they must therefore lie outside the field of all possible awareness. The reactions to danger; the reflexes and movements such as gland secretion and stomach digestion, which are supposed to occur in the world of mechanism; the automatic workings of internal organs (like the heart) which maintain the body; the activity which tries to repair internal and external injuries — all these are manifestations of a rational directing intelligence within the body itself. Countless, complex blood cells are born, mature, and soon die in every human being. They are active, purposeful lives. Yet each is unaware that there is a common entity called man behind the whole group, just as he himself is never aware of the processes whereby the white and red corpuscles of the blood carry on their work. So mind contains physical awareness but may not be limited only to one kind of it.

Why is it that plants find their nourishment, animals their food, and man his subsistence and clothes — all out of the body of the planet? Why is it that Nature provides so unerringly for their needs? The answer is that Intelligent Mind is the underlying basis of everything, the activating force of the universal event. Only when this idea has been thought through on every level does it become clear enough, its importance vivid enough, and its implications visible enough. It leads directly to two other ideas.

First, the World-Mind is the origin of all existence. Just as it is in the very nature of the sun to radiate light, so it is in its very nature to manifest the cosmos. Second, all things have God as their essence but no thing reveals God as the essence. The immensity of the universe is unimaginable. Our earth, despite its continents and oceans, is less than an atom against that astounding vastness. Yet we come closer to the truth when we understand that although the entire cosmos is an inevitable expression of the World-Mind, it is still a most limited expression.

The World-Mind is all-conscious, all-knowing, and all-present. It is impossible for man to know all the truth about any single fact, only this Mind can do that. Nor can any human being ever comprehend all the particulars of past and future as it can comprehend them. All possible kinds of existence are grasped together by the World-Mind. Thus its consciousness is truly cosmic in a way no finite consciousness could ever be. All points in space and all moments in time are held within the World-Mind. Such an infinite capacity of experience is utterly beyond the immediate comprehension of the finite human intellect.

And yet men everywhere try to drag God down to their own littleness! They have attached their dubious and false imaginations to the word, or used it in different senses. The meaning here assigned to it is that of a supreme imperishable Power which is both in the world (and hence in us) and yet transcends the world.

What is that Power? Is it a Thing or a Person?

It is neither, and those who think otherwise are deceiving themselves. Philosophy holds that Mind is this one ultimate reality. God is Mind, and is everywhere. Only an impersonal Mind could be everywhere present in such a boundless cosmos, sustaining every kind of personal life as it does. God's creatures could not be other than personalized; but God Itself could not be. If it were, then the planets would not rotate under universal law but under personal whim.

The demand for a personal God is really the instinctive attempt of the personal ego to drag God down to its own level, the natural longing of the human entity for a glorified human Comforter. Man is a person and feels the need of personal relationships. This is quite pardonable and proper in all his human activities, including his religious ones. But to introduce it into his attempt to penetrate metaphysically to the inmost secret of his link with the infinite power, is to remain in the nursery and to refuse to leave the elementary stage of the spiritual life. It is to insist on spelling over and over again the first words of wisdom in the school primer of life.

The suffering man may say hard things about the austere indifference of God, even about the puzzling and implacable cruelty of God, just as the happy man may say pleasant things about the gracious benevolence of God. Both men know nothing about the real nature of God and are merely investing impersonal being with personal human attributes enlarged to a cosmic scale. It is a God made in their own image. All our reproaches

upon God for having made this or that faulty part of the universe, or having permitted this sin or that misery are based upon our primal error in thinking of God as a man. A humanized God is no God at all. Men can more easily understand the concept of a Deity who is somewhat like them, who is capricious, temperamental, revengeful, and biased, who is open to, and desirous of, flattery. They cannot so readily understand the concept of a Deity who is too impersonal to be affected by such personal approaches, too impalpable to be reached by ornate pageants.

Wherever and whenever these pages have criticized the dogma of a personal God, they have done so with the thought in mind of the glorified and magnified man, of the arbitrary, jealous, revengeful, unfair creature who is to be flattered by praises or swayed by fears. The power sustaining the cosmos, the Mind behind it, is infinite, ultimate, and eternal. How can it ever be personal, when a person may think of objects outside himself whereas such a power could never do so? The glorified man of esoteric religion is a finite God, whereas this absolute being of esoteric philosophy is an infinite one.

Yet those who passionately believe in a personal God have uncriticizable basis for their criticizable belief: those who fervently feel His presence are not mistaken in their experience. That basis is the Overself, the root of that feeling is the Overself too. To think of the One Infinite Life-Power as the All, is to think of God; to think of it as oneself, is to think of the ego; to think of it as that

in which the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep merge, is to think of the transcendental Overself.

Just as man feels an ego within himself, so this personal ego in exalted moments may feel a living Entity behind and within it. In that sense only is this Entity its personal God. It was to this Entity that Jesus addressed the opening sentence of the Sermon on the Mount, "Our Father which art in Heaven." The word Father indicates and expresses some kind of a personal relationship here. This is therefore the paradox, God is both personal and impersonal, appearing in their own minds as the former to those who need him as such, but being the latter in essence.

So long as man looks for a God made in his own image, he never finds God in reality. The human mind creates its own gods. They are in the end only its own conceptions, but behind them all still exists the reality on which they are based. Growing intelligence and evolving ethics yield an ever higher idea of God.

Until man can realize within his own consciousness his nearness to God, whatever idea he forms of God will be a useful help, if not a practical necessity, to inspire his efforts, influence his motives, and guide his attitudes. He must love this Idea if one day he is to love that which is beyond all ideas, the Absolute which is beyond all relativity.

Meditation is your true nature.

—Ramana Maharshi

IN LOVING MEMORY

With the passing of Sister Achala on May tenth, Ananda Ashrama has sustained a vital loss. This alert, efficient, dependable and dutiful Sister, sound in judgement, whose name meant "unshakable," served in every department of the Ashrama's life for thirty-seven years, giving herself unreservedly to its multiple needs.

As a young woman from Indiana, trained to be a stenographer, the Sister joined Swami Paramananda's consecrated community in Boston in 1918 as his disciple. Many of the Swami's talks which have been published in the "Message of the East" were recorded by our Sister.

By Divine grace Sister was able to overcome the limitations of her health. Her zeal to serve the Ideal coupled with an indomitable will were behind the many years during which she was at once the secretary, manager, shopper, cook and general correspondent of the Ashrama, continually assuming more responsibility. By telephone and letter Sister was always available with comfort and counsel for our innumerable friends.

Until the last Sister was fully conscious maintaining a live interest in all the activities around her. She was reluctant to leave the Ashrama which had been her whole life.

On Friday, May the thirteenth, the community and invited friends gathered together in the Temple patio to honor the one whose release had created a great void in all hearts. After music and scriptural reading, Srimati Gayatri Devi spoke with appreciation of the Sister's loyal and un-

flinching devotion to her guru and his sacred mission. Tributes were then read:

She was a consecrated soul and devoted herself to the work of our Master for almost half a century. May her soul rest in peace at the feet of the Master. —*Swami Nikhilananda*

To be constant and true in love to one's Ideal as you have been to Swamiji and his work, gives someone like me, who has so recently entered the work, a light to go by, and sustains the hope that God may forever keep me constant to my guru and the Ideal, just as you have been through all these long years. —*Cohasset Ashrama*

I know how ardently Sister Achala loved her work and what it meant to her to give up even one of her duties. I don't believe the Ashrama ever had a more devoted soul —*Glory Raye*

Sister Achala has been my great friend for so many years. Her prayers have eased my troubles always. —*Helen Martin*

Sister Achala was reclining on the easy chair with a brave smile on her pale face; she was encouraging and wonderfully serene. I came away from her with a feeling of fulfillment and wonder because I witnessed a profound courage in the face of death and an aura of dedication. And I thought of the master who had produced such remarkable transformation in such a frail person. To me, Sister Achala was kindness itself, and I rejoice in her nirvana; for what could be more satisfying than the freedom from the round of births and sufferings! —*Swami Parampanthi*

We shall always treasure the memory of a

staunch and dependable friend, one who was able to overlook all one's failings. I know that you will, as we will also, miss her physical presence and her faithful service. She had such rare qualities! But her life is sure to be an inspiration to those who take up her duties.

—Juanita & Stewart Belcher

It was wonderful to know that Swamiji filled up Sister Achala's last moments with himself, charging the whole atmosphere around her. The Lord is collecting His own one by one. He only knows who comes next. It is not death; it is a great blessing when the deathbed is filled up with Divine fragrance and when He holds the hand in the time of crossing. May she find rest and peace in the ever loving Presence for whom she dedicated her life. My mind has gone back to those days when we were together like happy children.

—Charushila Devi, India

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

On her way to California, Srimati Gayatri Devi paused in Rochester, New York, on April 6th, for a brief rest and to speak at the home of the devoted Carlsons. On the 8th, she addressed a select group of doctors and therapists at the Psychiatric Institute of the state hospital in Cleveland, Ohio on "Vedanta and Mental Health." The following evening, in Cincinnati, she spoke at the University YMCA on "Vedanta and the West." The next morning, in the same city, a religious service was held for the Indian students and their families, and that evening at 7:30, the First

Unitarian Church extended a warm welcome to Gayatri Devi. Here the public lecture, before a large audience, was on "Religion of the Hindus." April 11th, she arrived at the western Ashrama.

Easter activities began with the special observance of Holy Thursday and Good Friday and culminated in the Sunrise and 11:00 o'clock services on Sunday, the 17th.

Tuesday evening, the 26th, found Gayatri Devi in Carmel-by-the-Sea as the guest of the Cherry Foundation. Here she spoke before a select group of friends.

Lord Buddha's birthday was celebrated on Thursday, May 12th, with an out-of-door service under a starlit sky in the Temple patio.

The observance on May 22nd of the 37th Anniversary of the founding of the Ananda Ashrama was a joyous occasion. Over fifty cars climbed to the hilltop, bringing old and new friends to the 11:00 o'clock service. Tributes were paid by various members of the congregation, and a Hindu dinner, prepared in the Cloister kitchen, was served at the Guest House to ninety persons.

Swami Paramananda was remembered on June 19th with a public service honoring his liberation. and again on the 21st with special devotions.

Srimati Gayatri Devi left for Boston on the following day, arriving safely that same evening in Cohasset. In her absence, the work in the Boston Chapel and at the Cohasset Ashrama had been faithfully carried on by Srimati Snehalata Devi. The Easter Sunrise service and Swami Paramananda's memorial service were held in the new Temple of the Universal Spirit.